

# How to Be Used by God

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, November 24, 2019

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**Main Theme** – A message responding to/focusing on the following Q: “How to Be Used by God?”

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## WORSHIP & PRAYER

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Regular Events**
  - WM – Tuesday Evening, December 10, from 6:30–8pm
  - MM – Saturday Morning, December 14, from 9–10:30am
- **Special Event**

For some time, the Board of this assembly has prayerfully considered the establishment of a sober house (designed for women in transition/crisis). In an age when substance abuse, chemical addiction, domestic violence, etc., are at EPIDEMIC levels, the Church must work to provide effective RESPONSE. After a year of discussion, we believe it is time for this church to take a step of faith and bring a long-held dream to reality.

I want to invite you to an INFORMATIONAL meeting (to be held TODAY after service). This meeting will touch upon the genesis of this ministry idea, the vision/need for such a sober house, next steps, etc. This meeting will provide you with an opportunity get your hearts and head around an opportunity to show Christ’s love to women in need.

**FYI 1** – This informational meeting will likely be followed by FORMAL action at the Annual Business Meeting. Since you can expect to hear more about this in the days ahead, please AVAIL yourself of the opportunity to join us today after service (i.e., app. 20 minutes)!

**FYI 2** – Potluck Supper to Follow this Informational Meeting.

## MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

- Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work
- Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

### **Luke 6:38 (NIV)**

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

**NOTE** – Special thanks for your generosity toward Max & Lauren Brockmeyer (HUGE OFFERING).

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- **CHILDREN TO REMAIN IN SERVICE TODAY (OCC)**
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## INTRODUCTION

As always it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you today. Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes.

## SETTING THE STAGE

TODAY is OCC Sunday. I want to say THANK YOU for preparing these many shoeboxes—shoeboxes designed to bless children in impoverished nations. Your investment and loving participation matter to the Lord. May each box function as a SEED for the Gospel—bringing forth fruit for time and eternity! We will pray over these shoeboxes at the end of today’s service.

**FYI** – One of the many reasons that I love OCC is that it provides the people of God an annual opportunity to be USED by God. Misty and I pack boxes because we want to see God move in and through us to advance the cause of Christ throughout the earth! I know that this is your heart as well (which I COMMEND).

**Q.** Of course, wouldn’t it be WONDERFUL if the Lord could use us EVERY DAY to advance His cause throughout the earth? The reality is—this is PRECISELY what the Lord desires for us as well! Thus said, this morning I want to bring forth a rather straightforward, simple message that—if applied—could bring forth transformation:

**1) To the World Around You**

**2) To You (as God USES You)**

**FYI** – This morning I want to outline principles re: “How to Be Used by God in Great Ways” (**SLIDE**). We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time. Once again, please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes. May we have ears to hear what the Lord is speaking in this hour!

## BE WILLING

If you want to be used by God – you must BE WILLING.

**FYI** – Before God can use you (to the fullest degree), you must WANT to be used. i.e., Christian ministry begins in one place and one place alone: a willing spirit/attitude. A Christian must possess the DESIRE to see God move in and through them for such movement to occur.

**KEY** – Consider a biblical example of this:

### **Isaiah 6:1–8 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)**

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “**Here am I. Send me!**”

**NOTE 1** – We need a generation of people who—like Isaiah—will volunteer for service.

**NOTE 2** – If you are willing, God is looking for someone just like you. Consider the following:

**ILL** – A one-legged schoolteacher from Scotland came to J. Hudson Taylor to offer himself for service in China. “With only one leg, why do you think of going as a missionary?” Asked Taylor. “I do not see those with two legs going,” replied George Scott. He was accepted.

## **BE AVAILABLE**

If you want to be used by God – you must BE AVAILABLE.

**NOTE** – It's one thing to be willing to serve the Lord. It is another to be available for such service.

**Q. What do I mean by this?**

**A.** I mean that you will allow for divine interruptions (FLEXIBILITY in your well-laid plans to serve).

**FYI** – Rarely will Christian service be convenient, easy, or pre-planned in many regards. Often in the midst of life and living, the Lord will call upon you to lay ASIDE your schedule to meet a need/impact a life. **Q.** Will you make yourself available at such times?

**KEY** – Consider a biblical example of this:

### **Acts 3:1–10**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

**NOTE 1** – I am sure that Peter and John were QUITE busy and had plans for that day/afternoon. But in the midst of their activities, they made time for this moment of ministry and became AVAILABLE to the Lord. And not only was this man healed, but MANY came to hear the Gospel because of this event (cf. 3:11–26).

**NOTE 2** – I know that many of you are EXCEEDINGLY busy and have nearly every moment of your day planned. **Q.** In the midst of your life and living, will you make time for the Lord to use you if He calls you to be available? Even when it is inconvenient?

## **BE SENSITIVE**

If you want to be used by God – you must BE SENSITIVE.

### **Q. What do I mean by this?**

**A.** If God is going to use you, you must be SPIRITUALLY sensitive/attuned to Him.

**NOTE** – Ministry is NOT something that you do apart from God—it is something that you do in response to His divine, in-the-moment LEADING. But this only works IF you are sensitive to His call and voice (cultivated in ongoing, intimate connection).

**KEY** – Consider that this is precisely how Jesus ministered:

### **John 5:19, 30a**

19 . . . Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. . . . 30 By myself I can do nothing . . .

**KEY** – Consider a biblical example of this:

### **Acts 16:6–10**

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**NOTE 1** – Note the sensitivity of Paul to the leading of the Spirit.

**NOTE 2** – Note the obedience of Paul et al. to the call of the Spirit.

**NOTE 3** – Note the end-result of such ministry – ministry in Europe.

**KEY 1** – We need men, women and children who know the voice/leading of the Spirit.

**KEY 2** – We need men, women and children who obey the voice/leading of the Spirit.

**KEY 3** – I’m convinced that such ministry and such results are possible today in Him!

## **BE ATTENTIVE**

If you want to be used by God – you must BE ATTENTIVE.

**NOTE** – i.e., Those who want to be used by God must be attentive to/aware of the NEEDS around them. It's that simple. In an age when many live oblivious, often with their mind/eyes fixed on some task/piece of technology, we need people who SEE the world around them.

**KEY** – Consider a biblical example of this:

### **Matthew 25:31–40**

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

**KEY** – The righteous herein were NOT aware of the spiritual implications of their ministry (i.e., serving others was deemed service unto Christ). However, the righteous were attentive to/aware of the NEEDS of those around them! Consider:

i.e., These were a people who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, opened their home to strangers, clothed the needy, tended to the sick, and visited the prisoner. Such ministry can ONLY happen through people who first SEE those who are hungry, thirsty, estranged, helpless, hopeless, and desperate. Targeted action was FOUNDED UPON genuine awareness!

**Q. To what degree do you see the world around you? Are you attuned to the needs of others?**

**NOTE** – I am NOT saying you are to meet every need in Christ. Only He can do that. But I am saying that He is calling you to meet SOME need! He has placed you in this world to strategically meet some needs, according to your abilities, gifts, etc.

## **BE ACTIVE**

Thus said, you must BE ACTIVE. i.e., words, there MUST come a time when your compassion for people moves you to some definitive ACTION! Though we CANNOT be saved by doing good deeds, those who are saved are called to DO good deeds in Christ's Name. Consider:

### **Ephesians 2:8–10**

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**KEY** – We're called to EMULATE Christ's example—who was characterized in the following way:

### **Acts 10:38**

38 . . . God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and . . . he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

**KEY** – Consider a biblical example of this:

### **Luke 10:25–37**

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'[c]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[e] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."



**NOTE** – Note the activity of the Samaritan as compassion MOVED him to action—application(s)?

**ILL** – “Lord, help me to do all the good I can, by all the means I can, in all the ways I can, to all the people I can, as long as ever I can.” -John Wesley

**Q. What can you do? What steps can you take? What gifts can you offer?**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**Q. Do you want to be used of God to do great things?**

1. **Be Willing**
2. **Be Available**
3. **Be Sensitive**
4. **Be Attentive**
5. **Be Active**

## **OCC SUNDAY**

As we seek to impact our local community for Christ (individually and collectively), I do praise God for OCC and this annual opportunity to touch the nations. With today being OCC Sunday, we believe God to use these boxes to change lives for time and eternity!

**NOTE** – Allow me to say thank you to a great many people:

- Thank you to Ruth D. for your leadership, diligence and vision
- Thank you to the CYC workers, children and youth (packing party)
- Thank you to the individuals/families who worked to pack shoeboxes
- Thank you to those individuals and families who financially contributed

Our combined efforts have helped to make this a tremendous year! Total number of boxes?

At this time, I want to pray over these boxes. Ruth – would you join me up front, please?  
I’d also like to invite all of the children up to lay a hand on these boxes as we pray. **PRAYER**